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Australian Labor Party

# Brief history of the Australian Labor Party

[Melbourne]

[1930]

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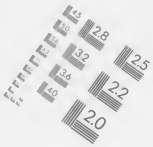

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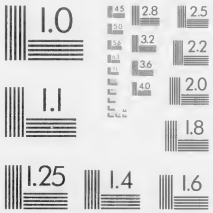


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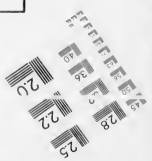

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TRADES HALL, MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

# Brief History of the Australian Labor Party

The Political Labor Movement in Australia was brought into being as the result of the Maritime strike of 1890. The outcome of the strike impoverished such Unions as were in existence at that time. There grew up amongst the workers an agitation to have representation in the various State Parliaments so that the claims of the workers could be voiced by direct representatives. At the following elections a number of Labor men were elected.

Prior to 1900, Labor candidates were selected and campaigns conducted by local Trades and Labor Councils, or groups of workers willing to assist, without any real platform or rules to guide them.

During 1900-1 the Australian Labor Party, as it is now constituted, was brought into life. The membership of the Party being made up of members of Trades Unions becoming affiliated and by the formation of Political Branches of workers who subscribed to the Platform and Constitution of the Party.

The membership of the Australian Labor Party now numbers well over 500,000, of which 90 per cent. are members of Trades Unions and 10 per cent. members of Political Branches.

The membership of the Australian Labor Party has increased over 400 per cent. during the past fifteen years.

In some countries it is stated that direct political action by the constitution of a Political Labor Party has had a weakening effect on Industrial Organisation. In Australia the effect has been the opposite, as the membership of the Industrial Unions has increased from 171,000 in 1910 to 911,541 in 1928 (vide Commonwealth official Year Book). The increase in membership of Industrial Unions for the period mentioned was over 500 per cent. whilst the increase in population for the same period was 25 per cent.

At the last Commonwealth elections (October, 1929) Labor Candidates polled 1,777,748 votes against 1,415,235 votes polled for all anti-Labor candidates. The total number of voters on the Commonwealth roll was 3,394,016. The Labor Party Candidates secured forty-seven of the seventy-six seats in the House of Representatives. The Leader of the Federal Labor Party (Mr. J. H. Scullin) was commissioned to form a Labor Administration (the first since 1914).

**Australian Labor Party—Eleventh Federal Labor Conference. Held at Canberra, 11/5/27 to 16/5/27.**

Left to Right.—Front Row: R. O'Halloran, M.L.A. (N.S.W.), H. George, M.H.A. (S.A.), R. Cosgrove, M.H.A. (Tas.), J. J. Kenneally, M.L.A. (W.A.), Vice-President; Ex-Senator J. Hannan (Vic.), President; D. L. McNamara, M.L.C. (Vic.), General Secretary; A. G. Angel (S.A.), Senator E. Needham (W.A.), G. Bodkin (N.S.W.), J. J. Daley (S.A.), Senator C. Graham (W.A.), J. R. Palamountain, M.H.A. (Tas.), W. Harrop (N.S.W.). Second (middle) Row: M. M. Blackburn, M.L.A. (Vic.), J. M. Gabb (S.A.), H. Kneebone (S.A.), F. Brennan, M.H.R. (Tas.), J. H. Scullin, M.H.R. (Vic.), A. Wilson, M.L.A. (W.A.), P. Mooney (W.A.), L. McDonald (Qld.), W. Demaine (Qld.), M. O'Halloran (S.A.), G. Becker, M.H.A. (Tas.), G. Buckland (N.S.W.), W. J. Duggan (Vic.). Top Row: Ex-Senator A. Gardiner (N.S.W.), J. S. Collings (Qld.), J. Burgess (W.A.), W. Forgan Smith (Qld.), B. Maclean (Qld.), C. Crofts (Vic.), J. A. Guy, M.H.A. (Tas.), W. S. Riordan (Qld.), E. Pinkard (Tas.), J. Kaine (N.S.W.), E. J. Holloway (Vic.).

**Australian Labor Party—Twelfth Federal Labor Conference. Held at Canberra 26/5/30 to 30/5/30.**

**Front Row** (from left to right).—R. F. Davenport (official reporter), Mrs. McGowan (N.S.W.), D. L. McNamara, M.L.C. (Vic., Federal Secretary), Rt. Hon. J. H. Scullin, P.C., M.H.R. (Prime Minister) (Vic.), J. J. Kenneally, M.L.A. (W.A.) (Federal President), Cr. W. J. Duggan (Vic., Federal Vice-President), Miss May Holman, M.L.A. (W.A.), W. H. Demaine (Qld.).

**Centre Group** (from left to right).—Hon. P. Collier, M.L.A. (W.A.), M. P. Hynes, M.L.A. (Qld.), C. W. Frost, M.H.R. (Tas.), E. J. Ogilvie, M.H.A. (Tas.), R. S. Ross (Vic.), P. J. Mooney (W.A.), J. S. Collings (Qld.), F. Sands (N.S.W.), J. Dedney (W.A.), Hon. F. Brennan, M.H.R. Federal Attorney-General (Tas.), J. Curtin, M.H.R. (W.A.), W. J. Riordan (Qld.), T. Jude (Tas.), A. Luchetti (N.S.W.), Hon. W. Forgan Smith, M.L.A. (Qld.), G. E. Yates, M.H.R. (S.A.).

**Back Row** (from left to right).—A. S. Drakeford, M.L.A. (Vic.), C. E. Culley, M.H.R. (Tas.), Lewis McDonald (Qld.), J. J. Graves (N.S.W.), Hon. A. G. Ogilvie, K.C., M.H.R. (Tas.), J. W. Burgess (W.A.), H. Kneebone (S.A.), J. Ryburn (N.S.W.), A. A. Calwell [illegible], Hon. J. McWhae, M.H.R., Speaker Commonwealth Parliament (S.A.), A. W. Jones [illegible].

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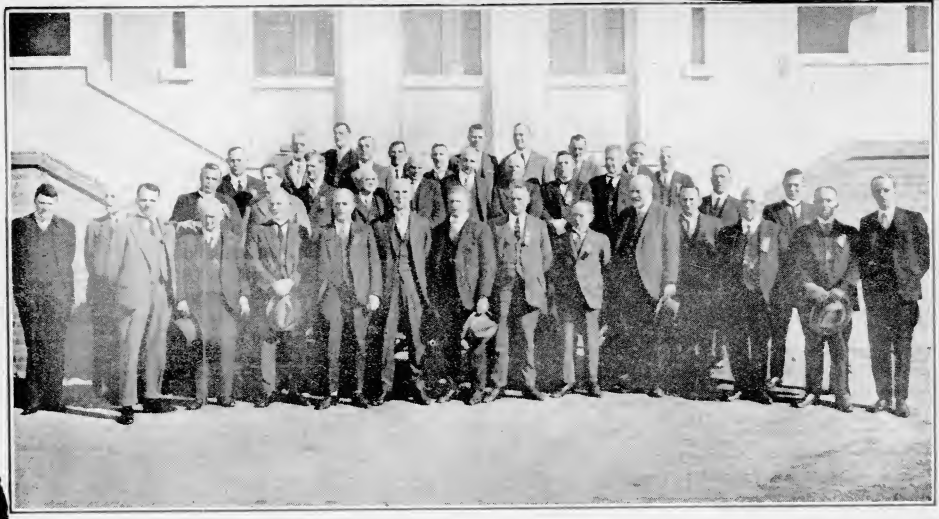

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Back Row (from left to right).—A. S. Drakeford, M.L.A. (Vic.), C. E. Culles, M.H.R. (Tas.), L. Lewis, M. Donald (Qld.), J. J. Graves (N.S.W.), Hon. A. G. Ogilvie, K.C., M.H.R. (Tas.), J. W. Burgess (W.A.), H. Knechone (S.A.), J. Kaine (N.S.W.), A. A. Calwell (N.S.W.), [illegible] (Qld.), [illegible] (Tas.), [illegible] (Vic.).

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